

BULLOCK COULD MISS VITAL CUP BATTLE

F.A. Cup, 3rd qualifying round preview by **STUART EARP**

DEFENDERS Dave Bullock and Ian Rundle could miss tomorrow's (Saturday) crucial F.A. Cup 3rd qualifying round tie at Chatham due to injury. Bullock has been suffering with a weak ankle, while Rundle has back trouble.

Both will have fitness tests and if they fail, it will mean a major re-shuffle in the back four with probably Rob Williams playing alongside Phil Wood. There is one more casualty in the Wycombe squad — Tony Horsemann — who has a knee injury.

Providing the three are fit, manager Brian Lee will again have to choose between Tony Brothers and Williams for the midfield spot. Brothers came in against Kingstonian last Saturday but Lee could prefer the strength of Williams in what could turn into a physical encounter.

The same could be said of the choice between Tony Horsemann and Dylan Evans upfront. Horsemann came back into the side on Saturday and could well keep his place after a mediocre performance by Evans at Banbury.

INCENTIVE

Whatever the line up, there's no mistaking the size of the task ahead of Wycombe tomorrow. Chatham are enjoying a really successful season and are full of confidence. They also have the added incentive of reaching the third round for the first time in 50 years.

The last time they reached this stage of the competition was in 1921, when they entertained St. Albans at their Maidstone Road Ground; they won the match in front of a huge 4,500 crowd, the second largest ever. The next round saw them lose 5-0 at Norwich.

Chatham were formed in 1882 and are the second oldest club in Kent. The oldest being Cray Wanderers. They were one of the founder members of the first Southern League, which contained such teams as West Ham, Tottenham Hotspur and Arsenal. It was soon after the formation, that Chats drew their biggest ever gate, some 7,000.

In the first season Chats entertained one of the big league clubs, West Bromwich Albion in the FA Cup. They lost 11-1. The next season they moved their ground to Maidstone Road, Chatham, where they have remained for 92 years.

Severe lack of support caused them to withdraw from the Southern League in the 1920's and they were then concerned in the formation of the old Kent League, which contained many of the present day Southern League clubs.

Chatham have never attained greatness because they have always been in the shadow of nearby league club, Gillingham. But several times they have tried to better themselves.

They stayed in the Kent

league for many years until the beginning of the 1950s when they rejoined the Southern League. But when this did not work out, they tried the Aetolian League. For three years everything went well. Chats won the title in successive seasons and then the league cup, but the league soon folded up.

After a spell in the Metropolitan League they went back into the Kent League in the 1969-70 season.

DOUBLE

In their first year they were runners-up, the second saw them win the Kent League and cup double, and last season they were third. This term has started

off well and if the success continues they hope to rejoin the Southern League.

At the beginning of the present season, Chatham Town manager, Jimmy Boswell forecast, "This could be our year. We have been threatening success and if luck goes with us, the success could be imminent."

He was not far wrong. Chatham have had the best start to a season for years. They have lost just one of their first seven Kent League games, reached the second round of the F.A. Challenge Trophy and the third qualifying round of the F.A. Cup.

They are currently on a winning

streak, unbeaten in their last six games, including F.A. Cup wins over Molesey and Fleet. Luck has been with them as far as injuries are concerned and they are also scoring goals, 33 in their last 10 outings, and what is more significant, they have not scored less than three in each of their last five matches.

Included in these five matches, has been a 3-0 win against Molesey. Just a fortnight later, they had a difficult tie at Hampshire leaguers Fleet, conquerors of Uxbridge in the previous round. Chatham won that game 4-2.

Last Saturday they faced old rivals Sheppey, where they won 3-

2, to take their place in the draw for the Challenge Trophy second round, although one of their players was sent off.

Chatham's last taste of success was two seasons ago, when they won both the Kent League and Cup. While winning the league they lost just two of their 38 games and scored 108 goals.

Most of the double winning side have remained to make up the nucleus of the present team. Manager Boswell will not name his side before Saturday, but it will be from: Gunner, Ribbins, Adams, O'Sullivan, Lillis, Jones, Peck, Laraman, Patterson, Harrison, Hales, Driver, Buxton.



TONY BROTHERS
... midfield spot?